



News Release

For Immediate Release:
Wednesday, April 16, 2008
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Second Annual “Unplug ’n Play” is On Its Way!

Utahns encouraged to find alternatives to screen time

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Spring is just around the corner, and the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) and the Check Your Health programs want Utah children and families to turn off their electronic toys and experience all the fun activities Utah has to offer during “Unplug ’n Play” week, April 21-27.

Data from a 2007 UDOH survey show that, among Utah children aged 5-17, 30 percent of boys and 32 percent of girls watched two or more hours of TV on a typical weekday. Thirty-two percent of boys and 11 percent of girls played video games two or more hours per day on weekends. Also on weekends, the number of hours spent watching TV and playing video games increased for both boys and girls.

“The purpose of Unplug ’n Play week is to make kids and parents aware that they need to set limits on screen time,” said Lynda Blades, Project Coordinator, UDOH. “Kids need to know there are more active and creative things to do—just get up off the couch and go play,” she added.

According to the Center for Screentime Awareness, television cuts into family time, harms our children's ability to read and succeed in school, and contributes to unhealthy lifestyles and obesity. On average, children in the U.S. will spend more time in front of the television (1,023 hours) than in school this year (900 hours).

Last year, 15 Utah schools participated in an “Unplug ’n Play” competition sponsored by the UDOH and Check Your Health. They hope more schools will take the challenge this year.

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Elementary, middle, and junior high schools can compete for cash prizes. The first five schools that register will receive “Unplug 'n Play” wristbands for every student in their school. Information and registration forms for schools, families and individuals who want to sign up can be found at www.checkyourhealth.org.

For more information about Unplug 'n Play, contact Lynda Blades at (801) 538-6229 or lblades@utah.gov.

Check Your Health is a partnership of the UDOH, Intermountain Healthcare, and KUTV 2 News Fresh Air.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.